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Security Council

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Tuesday, 8 December 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Yoda	(Burkina Faso)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Kyrle
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Araud
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomas
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Pham Binh Minh

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Drug trafficking as a threat to international security

Letter dated 30 November 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2009/615)

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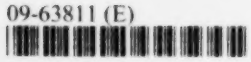

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Drug trafficking as a threat to international security

Letter dated 30 November 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2009/615)

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General and the ministers participating in today's meeting of the Security Council. Their presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under consideration.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cape Verde, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Luxembourg, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Sweden and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

It is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 4 December 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations in which he requests that the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Tete Antonio, be invited to participate in the consideration of the item in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Antonio to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 7 December 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations in which he requests that the Commissioner for Gender and Human Development of the Economic Community of West African States Commission, Ms. Adrienne Yandé Diop, be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Ms. Diop to take the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of members to document S/2009/615, which contains a letter dated 30 November 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

In accordance with the understanding reached earlier among members, the Security Council will take action on a statement by the President in connection with today's meeting prior to hearing statements from the Secretary-General and Council members. Accordingly, after consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reaffirms its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international

peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council notes with concern the serious threats posed in some cases by drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime to international security in different regions of the world, including in Africa. The increasing link, in some cases, between drug trafficking and the financing of terrorism is also a source of growing concern.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of strengthening transregional and international cooperation on the basis of a common and shared responsibility to counter the world drug problem and related criminal activities, and in support of relevant national, subregional and regional organizations and mechanisms, including with the view to strengthening the rule of law.

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of the actions undertaken by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Narcotics Drugs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other relevant United Nations organs and agencies in facing numerous security risks caused by drug trafficking in many countries and regions, including in Africa. The Council encourages them to undertake further actions in this regard.

"The Security Council stresses the need to reinforce the coordination of United Nations actions, including cooperation with INTERPOL, in order to enhance the effectiveness of international efforts in the fight against drug trafficking at the national, regional and international levels to tackle this global challenge in a more comprehensive manner in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility.

"The Security Council reaffirms and commends in that regard the important work of the UNODC in collaboration with the United Nations relevant entities and emphasizes the need for adequate capacities to support national efforts.

"The Security Council invites the Secretary-General to consider mainstreaming the issue of drug trafficking as a factor in conflict prevention strategies, conflict analysis, integrated missions' assessment and planning and peacebuilding support.

"The Security Council encourages States to comply with their obligations to combat drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime, to consider acceding to relevant international conventions, in particular the three United Nations drug conventions, and to investigate and prosecute, as appropriate, persons and entities responsible for drug trafficking and related crimes consistent with international human rights and due process standards.

"The Security Council recognizes the important contribution of States and regional and subregional organizations in tackling drug trafficking in all its aspects, and encourages them to share best practices, as well as information about illicit drug trafficking networks.

"The Security Council also recognizes the important contribution of civil society and other stakeholders in tackling drug trafficking in a comprehensive manner.

"The Security Council calls on the international community and the United Nations system to strengthen their cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the fight against drug trafficking, including in Africa.

"The Security Council calls on the Secretary-General to provide, as appropriate, more information on drug trafficking and related issues where it risks threatening or exacerbating an existing threat to international peace and security."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/32.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

I should like to thank the ministers and members of the Council for their presence at this debate and for their support for the presidential statement proposed by Burkina Faso, which the Council has just adopted.

Burkina Faso is pleased to organize this public debate of the Security Council on the important topic of the threat posed by drug trafficking to our collective security. In choosing to debate the issue of drug trafficking and international security, my delegation sought not to add a new item to the already lengthy agenda of the Security Council, but to invite the members of this organ and the full membership of the United Nations to consider how best to contain the harmful effects of a scourge whose impact has achieved alarming proportions.

We are particularly grateful to the Secretary-General for attending this debate. We also express our gratitude to Mr. Antonio Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We commend the role that UNODC plays in the interdiction of drug trafficking and its assistance to our States in that field.

The current and future threat of drug trafficking to international security is evident. The emergence of extremely powerful drug cartels has had a growing influence on policies and trade. Gang warfare in many countries poses a true threat to the internal security of States and to the stability of democratic institutions. The lucrative black market in drugs supports a number of terrorist groups, fuels the traffic in arms and money-laundering, generates violence and corruption, and as a result poses a serious threat to international peace and security.

From Latin America to Asia, through Europe and Africa, many countries and regions of the world have witnessed first hand the chaos arising from this scourge. Africa, and West Africa in particular, has become an important zone for the transit of cocaine. Drug laboratories built by traffickers bear out UNODC statistics indicating that annual seizures of cocaine in West Africa have grown exponentially in recent years.

Recent violations by drug traffickers of the airspace of some States in the subregion and the clandestine landing and unloading of drug cargoes demonstrate the great vulnerability of those States in the face of such criminal groups, who pose a real threat to our countries. Having become the preferred route — indeed, the new El Dorado — for drug traffickers, the African continent, already facing numerous challenges, merits particular attention as it is evident that the weak rule of law in Africa, poverty, corruption and the clear lack of resources are factors that encourage the activities of drug traffickers. Special attention should be paid to areas weakened by rebellions; these can constitute real threats to peace and security in the West African subregion through the rearming of such rebellions, which could fuel new conflicts.

The expanding scourge demands an international response through heightened vigilance and the firm commitment of the international community, based on universal adherence to the international conventions in the fight against drug trafficking and on effective cooperation and more active coordination of the efforts to combat illicit drugs. That is why the States of the West African subregion, in particular the members of the Economic Community of West African States, decided, under the chairmanship of Burkina Faso, to address the problem head-on by organizing the Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat to West Africa in Praia, Cape Verde, on 28 and 29 October 2008. On that occasion, President Blaise Compaoré delivered a very important message.

That Conference adopted an ambitious Action Plan, the implementation of which needs the international community's support. In our view, three important areas of the Praia Action Plan deserve the support of our development partners. They include: undertaking major national and international joint operations that target the trafficking networks operating in the region; setting up drug trafficking control and prevention units at international airports, sea ports and land border posts; and support for the establishment and strengthening of forensic laboratories for the sharing and exchange of information.

In addition to these operational and institutional aspects of the fight, above all, conditions for the sustainable development of developing countries must be ensured, since as long as concerns such as unemployment and extreme poverty persist, illicit drug trafficking will continue to flourish.

The international community, including international organizations, must make the fight against drugs one of their priorities. That is why the Security Council should include the issue in its integrated strategies for prevention and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The effects of drug trafficking on security are devastating for the health and productivity of individuals, for families and for the stability of States.

Its consequences are true obstacles to the development of our countries. Thus, there is an increasingly urgent need for us to find lasting solutions. That is why we hope that this debate will help to prompt resolute commitments and collective approaches on the part of the international community as well as individual States.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Burkina Faso presidency for putting this important subject on the agenda of the Security Council.

In recent years, drug trafficking has emerged as a leading threat to international peace and security. We see this most clearly in Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar, where the production and trafficking of illicit drugs fuel brutal and long-standing insurgencies. But in many other places, too, in West Africa, Central Asia, Central America, the Caribbean and parts of the Mekong region, criminal groups spread violence, fear and insecurity in their effort to control trafficking routes. These groups undermine State authority and the rule of law. They spread corruption, compromise elections and hurt the legitimate economy. In some countries, the huge profits generated through drug trafficking can rival gross domestic product. Drug trafficking also threatens to reverse advances in our peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan, Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and elsewhere.

This sobering reality underscores three fundamental points. First, drug trafficking is evolving into an ever graver threat that is affecting all regions of the world. It will require sustained political will and significant resources to counter this challenge.

Secondly, the transnational nature of the threat means that no country can face it alone. This fight requires a comprehensive international approach based on a strong sense of shared responsibility. States must share intelligence, carry out joint operations, build capacity and provide mutual legal assistance. So far, cooperation among Governments is lagging behind cooperation among organized crime networks.

Thirdly, we need a more balanced approach to drug control. Such an approach should focus on reducing the demand for drugs and the harm done by them; on promoting alternative development and the rule of law at the source of the supply; and on disrupting trafficking routes.

The United Nations plays an important role in providing a framework for international cooperation in addressing this challenge. This framework is built around strong United Nations-backed legal instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. But more needs to be done to ensure that all States become parties to those instruments and that they are implemented more effectively.

The United Nations is also a centre of expertise. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is seen as the authoritative source of information on trends in drug production, consumption and trafficking. It also provides capacity-building in the areas of countering drug trafficking, money laundering and corruption, and those efforts must be properly resourced.

We should draw encouragement from the many promising and innovative initiatives that are taking place. These include regional partnerships with the Caribbean Community, the Economic Community of West African States and others, and strategic cooperation with INTERPOL and other organizations. From West Africa and the Caribbean to Central and Western Asia, these efforts are improving drug control cooperation, building consensus on cross-border issues and promoting security and the rule of law.

Drug trafficking does not respect borders. Most of all, it does not respect people. It is a menace to the health of societies and individuals alike. It is associated with the horrific abuse of women, in particular. Those who run trafficking operations are ruthless and often murderous. We must pursue them and thwart them with the full force of the law and international resolve.

I call on Member States to work with each other and to support the United Nations in this crucially important endeavour. Finally, I welcome the presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/32) that has just been adopted.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Mr. Costa: I am honoured to report again to the Security Council. In the past few years the Council has looked at drug trafficking as a threat to peace and stability in a number of areas already referred to by the Secretary-General — Afghanistan, West Africa and Central America, just to mention a few. Today, I will report on new, worrisome developments concerning both West and East Africa, as well as the Saharan landmass generally.

There are indeed reasons to worry. In the past, Africa, already suffering from other tragedies, never had a drug problem. Today, under attack from several sides, the continent is facing a severe and complex drug problem: not only drug trafficking or production, but also consumption. Serious consequences in terms of health, development and security are inevitable, and I will demonstrate this, aided by a set of maps being distributed as I speak.

First, on the subject of West Africa, the subregion is shifting now from cocaine trafficking to amphetamine manufacturing. West Africa, particularly Guinea-Bissau, has received a lot of attention from the Security Council, because of the 50 to 60 tons per year of cocaine trafficked through the subregion over the past few years. As I mentioned at a meeting of this Council in November (see S/PV.6212), the recent discovery of seven laboratories in Guinea-Conakry is evidence that West Africa is also becoming a producer of synthetic drugs — amphetamines — and of crystal cocaine, refined from pasta basica.

Certainly there is also encouraging news, for which the Security Council can take credit. Initiatives by the Economic Community of West African States, Member States and the United Nations — including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) working together — have attracted attention and resources to the issue. We have detected a decline of cocaine flows into West Africa since mid-2008. A donor conference last week in Vienna attracted financial support. I thank Austria for hosting that event, which was meant to fund initiatives originally planned during the ministerial meeting at Praia in Cape Verde, a meeting already referred to by the President of this Council a few minutes ago.

My second point is about East Africa, where we have detected heroin trafficking flows. This is very new. Indeed, on the eastern side of the continent, on the Horn of Africa, 30 to 35 tons of Afghan heroin are being trafficked into East Africa every year. This is causing a dramatic increase in drug addiction of the worse type, namely, heroin injection. It is also spreading HIV, as I witnessed two weeks ago in the slums of Nairobi and Mombasa in Kenya. Drug treatment facilities are badly needed and I urge donors to help.

Drug trafficking is only one illicit activity in eastern Africa. Mainly because of the dramatic situation in Somalia, the region is becoming a free economic zone for all sorts of trafficking — drugs, migrants, guns, hazardous waste and natural resources — in addition to having the world's most dangerous waterways because of piracy. On 24 November, in Nairobi, ministers from the region issued a political declaration to strengthen the rule of law and human security. UNODC was pleased to see its own action plan for the region endorsed by the ministers, but the resources needed to assist East African countries now under attack are still unavailable.

My third point is about drug trafficking across the Sahel, which is a new problem, though perhaps inevitable. We have now acquired evidence that the two streams of illicit drugs — heroin into eastern Africa and cocaine into western Africa — are now meeting in the Sahara, creating new trafficking routes across Chad, Niger and Mali. Repercussions in neighbouring countries — for example, in the Maghreb countries — are inevitable. I will stress two facts that are noteworthy. First, as cocaine from the West is being traded one-on-one with heroin from the East, drugs are becoming a sort of new currency in the area. Drugs enrich not only organized crime, as we know. As in the Andes and in West Asia, terrorists and anti-government forces in the Sahel are extracting resources from the drug trade to fund their operations, purchase equipment and pay foot soldiers.

Secondly, drug trafficking in the region is taking on a whole new dimension. In the past, trade across the Sahara was by caravans and camels. Today it is larger in size, faster at delivery and more high-tech, as evidenced by the debris of a Boeing 727 found on 2 November in the Gao region of Mali, an area affected by insurgency and terrorism. It is scary — and I stress this point — it is scary that this new example of the links between drugs, crime and terrorism was discovered by chance, following the plane crash.

What can be done? To conclude, I will say that, first and foremost, we must strengthen national capacity. Greater and stronger development is needed across the region, so as to improve judicial systems and the rule of law — a point raised by the Secretary-General. But no State can tackle this transnational threat on its own. I invite members of the Council to recognize that shared responsibility is more than a rhetorical device; it is, and it must be, an operational concept. Therefore, and secondly, information sharing must be promoted among affected countries in order to disrupt trafficking networks. UNODC has brokered regional intelligence-sharing platforms in Central Asia — one is to be inaugurated tomorrow — in West Asia and in the Gulf. Such arrangements are not a threat to sovereignty; on the contrary, they defend the sovereignty now appropriated by rather sinister actors. Thirdly — and to be practical about finding solutions to the situation — I urge the Council to consider the creation of a trans-Saharan crime monitoring network, to improve information, monitor suspicious activity, exchange evidence, facilitate legal cooperation and strengthen regional efforts against organized crime. Such a trans-Saharan crime network would ensure a first, practical response to a growingly serious problem. An early warning device of this sort will especially help the review of situations that truly warrant investigation without having to rely on occasional circumstances such as a plane crash or an accidental drug seizure at sea. Together with our traditional partners, the Departments I mentioned at the United Nations and INTERPOL, we would be happy to assist. At the same time, UNODC shall continue to report on new developments in the region and elsewhere — as we have done periodically for the Security Council and other bodies — in order to facilitate understanding of the situation on the ground and, as a result, enable an appropriate response.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Costa for his briefing.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I invite Her Excellency Ms. Susan Rice, member of the cabinet of the President of the United States of America and Permanent Representative of the United States, to take the floor.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): The United States would like to thank Burkina Faso for its leadership in drawing attention to the threat to international peace and security posed by drug trafficking, particularly in West Africa. I welcome Minister Yoda back to the Chamber. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him and you, Mr. President, and your entire delegation for providing such an important voice to this body over the past two years. We also appreciate the update — as comprehensive and informative as ever — from Executive Director Costa and look forward to future briefings from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Drug trafficking is truly an international problem, and one with very serious consequences for the security and development of society. Increasingly, the illicit activities of violent criminal networks pay no heed to borders and undermine our common security and our shared economic health. Illicit actors are smuggling billions of dollars worth of illegal goods into our jurisdictions, thus weakening the rule of law, democracy and economic development. Transnational drug enterprises are just that: enterprises. They search constantly for higher profits and new business opportunities, and they are closely linked to other transnational criminal enterprises. Their cutting-edge organizations and their weapons and other equipment for communications, encryption and surveillance are often better than those available to the law enforcement officials charged with bringing them to justice.

Fighting transnational drug trafficking is not something that any one Government can do alone. We must work closely together on several levels: bilateral, subregional, regional and global. Narco-trafficking in West Africa is a serious and growing threat. It further destabilizes an already turbulent region whose past and present remain punctuated by civil wars and coups d'état.

Drug trafficking robs populations of legitimate sources of economic activity and development, and it tears apart the social fabric. West Africa has become a major trafficking route for cocaine moving from South America to Europe. Although most transit States in Africa do not yet have significant markets for illegal drug consumption, illegal drug abuse eventually takes

root and spreads. The wholesale value of cocaine entering Europe from West Africa is estimated to be $1.8 billion, with perhaps $450 million going to traffickers. These illicit profits far exceed the resources that regional Governments have to combat trafficking. The wholesale value of just a few months of trans-shipped cocaine can eclipse the gross domestic product of many countries in the region. Such situations threaten good governance and local and regional stability.

Taking effective measures against narco-trafficking requires both increased donor assistance and a clear demonstration of political will by regional Governments. The key to success is capable, reliable and transparent institutions. Drug traffickers thrive in poverty-stricken and permissive environments marked by porous borders and weak State authority. Corruption and ineffective governance often create de facto impunity for drug traffickers.

My Government therefore welcomes the Political Declaration and Action Plan adopted by West African leaders one year ago. We also welcome the recently launched West African Crime Initiative, which brings together the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization. The United States further welcomes UNODC's technical assistance activities, which will strengthen regional States' institutional capacity to combat the menace of international drug trafficking.

UNODC's regional programme for West Africa will represent a strategic road map for the organization's activities. Furthermore, we applaud the results of the donor's meeting that UNODC hosted with the Government of Austria in Vienna on 3 December, which raised more than €15 million to help ECOWAS reduce the region's vulnerability to drugs and crime.

For our part, the United States is working as a partner, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to combat the scourge of drug trafficking. The United States provides assistance for counter-narcotics and law enforcement and criminal justice capacity-building in more then 90 partner countries. In particular, we are supporting Member States' efforts to accede to and implement the three United Nations drug conventions, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption all of which provide the international legal framework and tools to confront this threat. Implementing those conventions and applying those tools will serve as a force multiplier.

The United States has already devoted more than $13 million to addressing this challenge in West Africa during the last fiscal year, and we are working to secure additional funding for bilateral and regional programmes. For example, we are working with the Government of Ghana to further develop an elite counter-narcotics law enforcement capacity to investigate drug trafficking organizations and support high-level prosecutions.

Our discussion today focuses on West Africa, but we face growing threats elsewhere too. In Haiti, for instance, the net flow of drugs has grown recently, and the Government, by its own admission, lacks the capacity to counter these flows or fully adjudicate related crimes. The United Nations and its Member States have invested years of peacekeeping efforts in Haiti. We cannot afford to let narco-trafficking undermine the real successes that the Government's efforts and the efforts of this body have begun to yield.

In Afghanistan the drug trade threatens political stability and economic growth by funding insurgents, feeding corruption and undermining the rule of law. While the United States continues to provide funding to UNODC for counter-narcotics activities in Afghanistan, we urge others to provide extra-budgetary contributions too. Over the next year we will seek to provide together $450 million in direct assistance for counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan.

We face enormous challenges as we seek to curb the increasing power of ruthless transnational crime and drug groups that threaten our communities. The United States is committed to combating these threats by working to dismantle criminal networks, develop law enforcement capabilities and help strengthen institutions and governance. This is a serious challenge, but we are intensifying our work with our fellow Member States and our international partners to meet it.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give now the floor to The Right Honourable Gareth Thomas, Member of Parliament and Minister of State for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Thomas (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We are particularly pleased to see you here today and are grateful to you and the Burkina Faso delegation for all your hard work in promoting an agenda item to which we attach great importance too. I would like to thank too the Secretary-General for his words, and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa for his informative and thought-provoking briefing.

We agree that drug trafficking constitutes a threat to international peace and security. We see this, as others have said, in several regions of the world. For example in Afghanistan, the drugs trade is one of the most powerful forces undermining legitimate Government and promoting instability. In that particular context I was pleased to see a decrease in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan by some 22 per cent this year, and an increase in the number of important drugs traffickers being prosecuted by Afghan authorities. But these gains are fragile, so we look to the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of international partners, to consolidate this progress.

Today we are particularly concerned about the threat posed by drug trafficking in West Africa and specifically the fact that West Africa has become a significant route for cocaine being trafficked from Latin America into Europe. There are a number of factors that make West Africa particularly attractive to drugs traffickers. Recent events in Guinea and elsewhere have highlighted the fragility of political institutions across much of West Africa. We strongly support African Union calls for an end to unconstitutional changes of government. West Africa is also the shortest disembarkation point when travelling from South America to Europe. Organized criminal gangs, particularly from Latin America, have been scaling up their operations and their presence in the region in the past five years. And we know that when their activities are disrupted in one country, they then look to exploit another.

These developments have serious implications for West Africa. Organized crime, drug trafficking, the misappropriation of assets and corruption disrupt growth, undermine investment and discourage entrepreneurship. In West Africa, organized crime and drug trafficking have the potential to undermine all the good work that has been done to promote economic development, reduce corruption and improve poor people's lives.

The clear role that West African States, and their leaders in particular, can play is crucial. That is why we thank the Cape Verdean leaders, for example, for the excellent work they have done on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Action Plan against drug trafficking. Now is the time to convert this plan into action and to operationalize it on the ground. The United Kingdom stands ready to help in taking this forward.

We welcome the work that the United Nations is undertaking in the region through its offices such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Office for West Africa. This includes developing programmes such as the West Coast Initiative, aimed at taking forward the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan. The United Kingdom Government is committed to supporting these efforts. That is why we have set up a cross-governmental strategy group to mobilize and coordinate United Kingdom counter-narcotics activity in West Africa. We have provided £750,000 this year to fund counter-narcotics projects in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. And we aim to provide more funding next year. Our Serious Organized Crime Agency has increased its presence in the region to help local law enforcement agencies target traffickers and develop better intelligence. Staff members of our Border Agency have been deployed to airports in Ghana and Nigeria to target drug mules. And we are working in partnership with Governments in West Africa to address governance and corruption concerns, and to tackle constraints to economic development.

We have had some successes but more needs to be done. We must make clear to cocaine users the impact they are having on the lives of people in producer and transit countries. We need to continue to help Colombia to combat its drug cartels. We need to work with international partners and organizations to ensure a coordinated and coherent response.

The threat from organized crime is constantly evolving. Criminals are very resourceful in finding new trades, new routes and new methods. We need to make sure our response is equally flexible.

We thank Burkina Faso for their draft presidential statement. We support the recommendation that the United Nations should consider mainstreaming drug trafficking into its wider conflict prevention, assessment and peacebuilding activities. And we call

on the Secretary-General to provide more information on drug trafficking where it risks threatening or exacerbating an existing threat to international peace and security.

In closing, I should like to thank the outgoing members of the Security Council — Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Libya and Viet Nam — for all their contributions over the last two years. And I would also like to welcome the incoming members — Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria. We look forward to working with them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, His Excellency Pham Binh Minh.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): I thank the Burkina Faso Presidency for the initiative to organize this open debate of the Security Council. And I thank you, Mr. President, for personally presiding over the debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their participation and statements.

More than ten years have passed since the General Assembly's special session on the world drug problem in 1998 and the international community has recorded encouraging achievements in this area. With greater importance attached to the prevention and control of drug trafficking, 95 per cent of United Nations Member States have acceded to the three international conventions on drug control — the highest rate of accession enjoyed by any United Nations legal document. The production of drugs and the number of drug users in the world have shown a downward trend, as reported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We recognize the efforts made by the United Nations specialized agencies, especially UNODC, in coordinating international drug control activities.

However, the situation of drug crime in the world continues to see complicated developments. As the profits from drug trafficking reach around $500 billion per year, second only to that from arms smuggling, drug criminals have exerted every effort to maintain drug trafficking at all costs. In addition to sophisticated means and advanced technology, they have taken advantage of globalization to expand drug production and consumption, increased contacts with criminals in other dangerous fields such as money laundering and arms smuggling, and established transnational criminal organizations. The super profits from drug trafficking are used to finance terrorist groups and acts of violence, causing unstable or even anarchic situations, and aggravating crises where they occur, and thus producing long-term negative impacts on security, public order and economic development.

The prevention and suppression of such dangerous crimes require joint efforts on the part of the international community. In the fight against drug trafficking, production and transport, we support enhanced international and regional cooperation, with the United Nations entities, in particular the UNODC, playing the leading role. While primary responsibility rests with the States concerned, United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, and other international and regional organizations have an important role to play in supporting and coordinating these efforts with a view to ensuring their effectiveness and avoiding duplication and waste of resources.

While we are fully aware of the challenges posed by drug trafficking, Viet Nam gives high priority to drug prevention and control. Viet Nam adopted the law on drug prevention and control in 2000 and amended it in 2008. Our Government established the National Committee on Drug Prevention and Control and endorsed the Master Plan and National Target Programme on Drug Prevention and Control until 2010.

Viet Nam has ratified the three United Nations conventions on drug control. In the context of the continuing spread of the drug menace and the increasing consensus of the international community on the need to strengthen the fight against drug trafficking, we hope that these important conventions will soon achieve universality. Viet Nam has also expanded cooperation with countries in the region, especially those in the Mekong subregion, and we have worked closely with UNODC. So far, Viet Nam has signed eight bilateral agreements on drug control, with Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, China, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Myanmar, Hungary and the United States. We hold that bilateral and multilateral cooperation play a critical role in the fight against drug trafficking.

As a constructive and responsible member of the Security Council, Viet Nam has actively participated in the work of the Council, thus contributing to the

maintenance of international peace and security as well as the fulfilment of the Council's mandate in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. During its two Presidencies, Viet Nam worked intensively to promote consensus among Member States in resolving important issues, organizing an open debate on "Children and armed conflict" and another on "Women and peace and security", which led to the adoption of resolution 1889 (2009).

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and Member States — and to Council members in particular — for their support for and cooperation with Viet Nam, which helped us fulfil the duty entrusted to us by the United Nations membership.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Vice-Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, His Excellency Johannes Kyrle.

Mr. Kyrle (Austria): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's open debate on drug trafficking as a threat to international security. Austria attaches great importance to the ongoing fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. We highly appreciate the efforts of the delegation of Burkina Faso and support the presidential statement to be adopted today. Moreover, Austria associates itself with the statement to be delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union later in this meeting. I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his commitment to this important issue. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Costa for his valuable input and committed leadership of the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, which plays a central role in combating illicit drug trafficking around the world.

Many States and their populations are increasingly ravaged by organized crime, in particular trafficking in drugs, human beings and arms, and related illicit activities such as money-laundering. These scourges destabilize governments, endanger democracy and respect for human rights, and hamper the economic and social development of entire regions in Africa and beyond. Organized crime is prevalent first and foremost in regions where Government structures are weak or even lacking, often owing to armed conflict. Likewise, organized crime — and the revenues derived from illicit activities — fuel and prolong conflicts, and may contribute to the financing of terrorism.

Globalized criminal networks engaged in illicit activities pose threats to internal and external security alike. Drug trafficking from origin to destination affects many countries in transit, often across several continents. No single nation can effectively tackle these challenges on its own. The presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/32) before us, therefore, rightly underlines the need to strengthen transregional and international cooperation on the basis of a common and shared responsibility.

A number of States confronted with difficult security challenges, especially in Africa, lack the capacity to respond quickly and effectively to them. We therefore commend the growing efforts to respond jointly to those challenges in the framework of regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. West Africa faces particular challenges in the fight against drug trafficking. In recent years, the region has turned into an important hub for cocaine trafficking from South America to Europe, and has also become a centre for the production of narcotic drugs. More investment needs to be made in developing regional and domestic capacities to tackle these problems effectively.

To this end, UNODC, ECOWAS and the Government of Austria co-hosted a donor round table in Vienna last week, with a view to increasing support for the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. Austria pledged, inter alia, substantive contributions to the joint West African Coastal Initiative earmarked for Sierra Leone, and a UNODC project in Mali aimed at capacity-building among national authorities. Austria will continue to support the zonal offices of ECOWAS, which play an important role in monitoring member States' respect of the pertinent ECOWAS legal instruments against drug trafficking and organized crime.

It is only by acting in concert that the international community will be able to prevail in the fight against drug trafficking. We therefore commend the role of UNODC in assisting the various stakeholders and coordinating their efforts in the region and beyond. In order to ensure the continuous delivery of technical assistance, including advisory and

analytical services, we fully subscribe to the need to strengthen the capacities of UNODC, as emphasized in the Presidential Statement.

A recent UNODC report has underlined the importance of strengthening the rule of law as a most effective remedy for enhancing countries' immunity to organized crime. The Council should duly take this into account when devising sustainable strategies for conflict areas. Universal adherence to, and accurate implementation of, pertinent international legal instruments, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations drug control Conventions, should be our common goal.

Our success or failure in tackling the scourge of drug trafficking will have a direct impact on the well-being of our citizens. The Council should step up its deliberations on this important matter, be it in general terms or with regard to specific regions. Austria would therefore welcome further debates in this regard.

The President: (*spoke in French*) I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Mexico.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for his briefing. We welcome the presence in the Chamber of Mr. Bedouma Alain Yoda, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, to preside over our work during this meeting. And we reaffirm our support for his presidency's successful leadership of the Security Council for December.

This is indeed a timely debate, given the international dimension that drug trafficking and its related crimes have taken on, not only in Africa but all over the world. The so-called new threats to international security are multidimensional, as the global drug problem and transnational organized crime show. Both of these problems deserve priority treatment, given their implications for the security, prosperity and development of our societies.

As Mr. Yoda indicated, this meeting will, without a doubt, contribute to deeper reflection on this problematic issue that disregards borders, weakens States and affects conflicts in various regions of the world. Drug trafficking must be addressed across the board, in all its aspects, from promoting prevention and treatment in countries with the highest levels of drug consumption, to international cooperation aimed at dismantling its increasingly sophisticated criminal linkages with their immense capacity to corrupt and their firepower, challenging security and undermining the rule of law.

It is important to remember that the fight against drug trafficking, besides its cost in human lives to our societies, diverts significant resources to the detriment of economic and social development, and we therefore deem it appropriate that the Security Council focuses its attention and promotes the adoption of effective measures through the items on its agenda that foster strategies aimed at preventing drug trafficking, in order to protect States and international security.

The fight against this scourge requires a firm political commitment on the international level, based on the globally recognized principle of the shared responsibility of States, with the aim of building mutual trust and encouraging strategies to eradicate this evil, while at the same time respecting in full the sovereignty of States. The threat posed by criminal acts related to drug trafficking demands effective international cooperation based on integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced strategies. This is necessary in order to ensure that the actions geared to reducing supply and demand are mutually reinforcing, in order to seal off areas of impunity, dismantle traffickers' operational structures and respond to the increased speed with which this dangerous phenomenon is progressing, undermining the socio-economic and political stability of our societies as well as their sustainable development.

Drug trafficking and its related crimes weaken States that have emerged from conflict, as well as their institutions. As a result, we must consider its regional and global impact, as has been said previously. It is clear that the power of the corruption and violence generated by the criminal drug industry are a destabilizing factor in such States. There is growing concern about the growth in organized crime involved in drug trafficking in a number of West African States, which are being used as havens or transit points for drugs that are produced in other parts of the world, particularly Latin America, and are en route to Europe.

These illicit groups and activities also pose threats to peacebuilding efforts in various States, as stated clearly by the Economic Community of West

African States. The growing prominence of these criminal and drug trafficking groups underscores the need to strengthen the national capacity of States to counteract these phenomena and to combat impunity and illicit drug trafficking.

It is crucial that the institutions and authority of the State be restored in countries that have emerged from internal conflict and that are affected by drug trafficking. Mexico is of the view that this illicit activity poses a serious threat to the security of States, and given that both the roots of this phenomenon and the solution to it transcend borders, it is crucial that international cooperation be promoted in order to tackle this scourge.

The global drug problem was the subject of a very detailed examination during the debates held this year in Vienna in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in New York during the Third Committee's October meetings on international drug control and in the November plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider the results of the high-level segment of the most recent session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (see A/64/PV.38).

Mexico participated actively in those events, as its recognizes that the General Assembly provides the ideal forum in which to highlight the importance, scope and implications of renewed international cooperation aimed at achieving tangible results against illicit drug trafficking by promoting a comprehensive and balanced strategy to curb this problem. This was reflected in the omnibus draft resolution on international cooperation against the world drug problem, which was adopted by consensus and was coordinated by my country.

We would like to highlight the fact that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs has promoted significant resolutions on the links between drug trafficking and the illicit trafficking in arms, on strengthening measures to combat money laundering linked to drug trafficking and related crimes, and on strengthening inter-regional cooperation between Latin American and Caribbean States and West African States.

The institutional response of the United Nations is very important, but — let us be clear — it is not enough, as drug trafficking is a increasingly complex phenomenon of globalization that requires a coordinated response and the unequivocal commitment of the international community.

Mexico believes that the United Nations must play a more active role in the debate on the fight against drugs and transnational organized crime, not only through its technical forums, but also by promoting high-level political commitments to combating this scourge. In 2010, we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which will provide a timely opportunity to reflect on the future of this regime.

We have a normative framework that has been in place since the 1980s. However, in spite of the existence of these excellent norms, we have been unable to put an end to illicit drug trafficking. The international community thus faces the immense challenge of guaranteeing the implementation of the conventions and agreements in this field.

The complexity of the issues associated with illicit drug trafficking and their various political, economic and social aspects highlight the need for international cooperation in order to combat this global threat. Therefore, it is particularly important that we seek out ways in which the Security Council can complement and contribute to the significant work carried out by the General Assembly and other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, in order to define better coordinated responses for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Finally, Mexico has taken the sovereign decision to commit itself to striving tirelessly to combat drug trafficking, exercising full State authority in protecting our society while shouldering our responsibilities to the international community and encouraging international cooperation on this issue at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President, for your presence here and to welcome that of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa.

Costa Rica was pleased at the convening of this debate. It reflects the growing awareness and the concern of the international community with regard to the threat posed by international drug trafficking to the security of many States and regions of the world.

For many years, the drug industry was a lucrative business that was run by criminal groups. However, in recent decades, new actors have joined the criminals, and what was once merely an illicit activity has become a threat to the security of States and regions. The new alliances in international drug trafficking circles now include warring parties, terrorists, insurgents, paramilitary groups and corrupt State agents. The aims of these new alliances include the reduction or even the elimination of the presence of the State, with the consequences that we are all well acquainted with.

This bleak picture has started to take root in Western Africa at a time when the region is strengthening the basic pillars of governance, the rule of law, peace and stability. These efforts are frequently undermined in States with porous borders, weak institutions, widespread poverty, high unemployment — in particular among young people — and widespread corruption. All of these factors make the subregion very vulnerable and allow organized international crime networks to operate over a large section of its territory and to expand the drug trafficking that takes places across West and Central Africa and is aimed at the markets of Europe.

The illicit drug trafficking networks take advantage of the weaknesses of and the challenges facing the countries of the subregion in terms of economic development and employment. The poverty and political weakness that prevent States in the region from exercising their authority throughout their territory provide the breeding ground for drug trafficking, which is frequently associated with insurgents or mercenaries. Drug traffickers can then also become involved in production, as has happened in West Africa, as Mr. Costa informed us in November (see S/PV.6212).

However, the threats to national and regional security are far from an exclusively African phenomenon. Many Latin American and Caribbean States as well as Asian States have also suffered under the onslaught of drug trafficking. Allow me to take this opportunity, while the Security Council is debating the threat posed by drug trafficking to the security of States and regions, to briefly mention the experience of some Latin American States, including Costa Rica.

I should like to begin by recalling that the world's main cocaine producing countries are found south of the Central American isthmus. According to reliable sources, there lies the origin of a trade that moves more than 1,000 tons of that drug every year. To the North lie the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, which are situated in the so-called drug trafficking corridors through which move drugs bound for the United States market.

As in Africa, drug trafficking in Central America and the Caribbean flourishes by virtue of State weakness, poverty and marginalization. Drug trafficking routes in the Americas cut across the three poorest countries of the continent and others with very limited resources to combat it. Central America, the countries that lie along the Central American drug trafficking corridor and Western Africa are recovering from wars that came to an end less than 20 years ago. They are also frequently assailed by large-scale climactic events. In those places, too, institutions are weak and poverty provides a breeding ground for corruption among poorly paid officials and public employees.

The drug trade exploits its advantaged position in order to recruit, better pay, train and arm its own armies, to equip them with sophisticated equipment, and to simplify their logistical and procurement chains. As if that were not enough, Central American and Caribbean transit States — as well as countries in Africa — also provide new markets for the drug trade. Our people thereby become victims who ultimately support the expansion of criminal activities. As a result, the burden to be borne by States increases by virtue of the vast resources that have to be devoted to combating international drug trafficking, which therefore cannot be used for efforts to promote peace, stability and human and institutional development.

I should like to conclude my sombre statement on the effects of international drug trafficking on countries along the routes on which it operates by pointing out that the trend towards consolidation, which exists even with regard to this heinous activity, has had consequences in Africa and other regions of the world. Competition between cartels and their constant movement from one place to another as a result of

international efforts serve to heighten the porous character of the borders of weak States where they set up their operations, bring new violence, corrupt institutions and alter the lives of populations straddling various States.

This Security Council debate should be seen as a call to strengthen early warning systems and to promote closer follow-up by the Secretariat and the Council in the most vulnerable countries. We call for the strengthening of all efforts that can serve to spread the rule of law. We also call for galvanizing the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations system as a whole with a view to preventing and addressing situations that, left ignored, could threaten entire regions and require costly intervention by the international community in the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Shalgham (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting — the first Security Council debate of its kind — on the effects of illegal drug trafficking on international security, and for personally presiding over this important meeting. On behalf of the Libyan delegation, I should also like to thank you and your delegation for preparing the presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/32) that the Council has adopted. I also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement, as well as Mr. Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his important briefing.

There is no doubt that, in debating this important issue, the Security Council is contributing to the efforts of other United Nations bodies to address the illicit drug trade and its serious consequences. With support from UNODC, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have addressed several aspects of drug trafficking, in particular in connection with its effects on public health and development and its links and contribution to organized crime.

There is also no doubt that, several decades ago, the international community realized the importance of international cooperation in controlling both drug trafficking and drug use. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was concluded in 1961 and amended in 1972; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances was signed in 1971; and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was finalized in 1988. In addition, the General Assembly, which devoted its twentieth special session to the problem of drugs, adopted a Political Declaration (resolution S-20/2, annex) that identified the objectives of international cooperation in addressing this issue. At its fifty-second session, held this year, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs devoted a high-level segment to evaluating the progress made since 1988 in achieving the goals identified at the twentieth special session, as well as to establishing priorities for the future. In that connection, on 12 March 2009, ministers and representatives participating in the segment issued the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Against the backdrop of advances in communications and transportation — and the opportunities they provide for criminals to move quickly and en masse — as well as the existence of a large number of vulnerable States, promoting international cooperation to combat the drug trade is more urgent than ever. Studies have shown that there are strong links between drug trafficking and armed conflicts, the proliferation of small arms, money-laundering and the financing of organized crime and terrorism. The illicit traffic in drugs now constitutes a significant source of laundered funds. It is also an important tool in the hands of those who seek to spread instability by promoting corruption and proliferating small arms, which are the most important component in fuelling conflicts in Africa.

Recent reports point to a disturbing increase in cocaine trafficking across West Africa, as well as heroin trafficking in East Africa. That is due to the precarious security situation in several States in those regions. That creates a serious threat to the security and the stability of those States and creates obstacles to sustainable development in them. It also constitutes a serious threat to all the States in the region.

In the expansive Sahel region of Africa, there is a concern that drug trafficking might be a principal source of financing for terrorist groups that are rampant in those desert areas and that continuously threaten the lives of the populations and of tourists.

Those groups seek to destabilize the States of the region.

The current situation in West Africa and the Sahel region requires international financial and technical support to the efforts of States in the region to promote cooperation among themselves in controlling their borders and in combating organized crime. We wish to express our gratitude to UNODC for their efforts in that area.

In countries where significant numbers of the population depend on the cultivation of drugs — such as Afghanistan, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Laos — there is a need for the international community to continue providing support to farmers and to urge them to take on legitimate and peaceful agricultural activities that are economically sound and sustainable. In that way, the production and supply of narcotics and drugs throughout the world will be reduced while food security would be strengthened and poverty reduced.

In conclusion, we commend the important role of UNODC, under the leadership of Mr. Costa, and we value his role in promoting and strengthening the capacity of Member States to confront illicit drug trafficking, crime and terrorism. We urge that UNODC be provided with the necessary financial resources to support its work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): First, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate and honouring us with your presence. Turkey believes that it is very timely and pertinent for the Security Council to deliberate on the important issue of drug trafficking as a threat to international security. Therefore I thank the delegation of Burkina Faso for taking that initiative.

We also thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for their comprehensive and insightful briefings. We very much appreciate the Secretary-General's leadership on raising awareness of the issue and the valuable work carried out by UNODC in building the capacity of Member States to combat illicit drugs and the links with organized crimes and terrorism.

Many of the difficulties, tensions and challenges that nations face vis-à-vis drug trafficking today are not exclusive to them as individual States. Indeed, drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and associated crimes such as terrorism and money-laundering are issues of grave concern that entail severe repercussions for the entire international community. Hence, there is a need for strong international cooperation on the basis of common and shared responsibility.

Aside from its international, global character, drug trafficking also presents a complex and multidimensional problem with enormous financial implications. Today the drug problem not only adversely affects the economic and social fabric of the countries concerned, it also constitutes a threat to the security of States. In particular, the increasing links between drug trafficking and acts of terrorism are a cause for serious concern. Today it is a well-documented fact that the revenue generated by drug trafficking has become a primary source of terrorist financing. It also undermines State authority, fuels corruption and hampers economic development and rule of law.

Therefore, given the magnitude and complexity of threats posed by drug trafficking, the fight against that challenge must be based on a comprehensive and effective strategy. The supply, demand and trafficking aspects of the drug problem have to be considered as interdependent aspects of the same predicament and thus should be dealt with through a balanced and integrated approach.

Turkey is a natural bridge between Asia and Europe. Therefore, as a transit country, it is generally affected by illicit trafficking of opiates from East to West and of precursors and synthetic drugs from West to East. Accordingly, Turkey makes every effort to further enhance the effectiveness of its efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking. However, as I have already mentioned, no country alone can combat drug trafficking, and thus national efforts must be complemented by effective international cooperation.

With that in mind, Turkey has signed and ratified all relevant United Nations drug control treaties and has concluded bilateral cooperation agreements with more than 70 countries. Turkey also actively contributes to the work of relevant international and regional platforms. We have long-standing cooperation with UNODC, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Paris Pact, the Council of Europe and the Southeastern Europe Centre for Combating Transborder Crime.

Activities of the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime constitute a good example of Turkey's efforts at regional cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking.

Now allow me to focus briefly on Africa, where drug trafficking is a relatively new phenomenon. That being said, its devastating effects are being felt across the entire continent, and nowhere more than in West Africa. Criminal organizations set on diversifying their illicit drug trade routes are aiming to manipulate the weak and unstable Government structures of that region. That is a dangerous threat that needs to be reversed, as the risks to regional stability are serious and require the immediate attention of the international community.

In the case of Africa, we have an opportunity to tackle the threat before it takes root and becomes a permanent problem in the subregions where it is now manifesting itself. We must seize the opportunity. Turkey thus emphasizes the need to develop a comprehensive approach to the efforts to combat drug trafficking in West Africa in particular. We welcome the special emphasis given by the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) to the issue.

As a nation that has long been at the forefront in the fight against drug trafficking, we understand full well the predicament of Western African nations, which find themselves stuck as a transit route for supply, on the one hand, and a large demand, on the other. The phenomenon is spreading through West Africa, and our experience dictates that only through effective, sustained and comprehensive international cooperation can it realistically be remedied. We believe that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UNODC and UNOWA, together with the nations of the subregion, will need to place ever more emphasis on the issue. We look forward to the rapid and effective implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan.

In developing institutional capacity to combat illicit drug trafficking in the region in a context of shared responsibility, increased international technical and financial support will also be crucial.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again the common and shared responsibility of the international community to fight drug trafficking, including in Africa. We hope that the Security Council's renewed commitment to address the threats posed by drug trafficking will re-energize international cooperation. The presidential statement, which we fully support, certainly sends the right message in that regard.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. Your presence is clear testimony to the importance you and your country, Burkina Faso, attach to the need to urgently address the threat to international peace and security associated with drug trafficking. I also thank the Secretary-General for his statement, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his briefing. I also recognize the presence of Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

This thematic debate provides an opportunity for the Security Council to comprehensively focus on drug trafficking as a threat to international peace and security. We have, in the past, addressed the issue of drug trafficking with respect to regional and country-specific situations. In particular, we have considered the West African subregion, and countries such as Afghanistan.

The dangers posed by transnational drug trafficking are widely recognized. The World Drug Report 2009, published by UNODC, highlights the linkage between drug trafficking and crime, and the dangers it poses to the security, stability and development of many affected countries.

The fact that drug trafficking has serious implications for security, health and other socio-economic facets are well known. In a June 2009 meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which Uganda chairs, the head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Ambassador Said Djinnit, highlighted the link between the spread of drug trafficking in the subregion and the risk of countries relapsing into conflict. That meeting also noted that, if not addressed immediately and effectively, the surge in drug trafficking in West Africa could jeopardize democratic governance in the region and lead to the expansion of criminal and terrorist networks.

It is therefore critical that actions and responses at the national, subregional and regional levels, and by the United Nations system and the wider international

community, be comprehensive and well coordinated. No country or region can manage on its own to control drug trafficking and its associated threats. There is need to take effective measures in countries where drugs and precursors are produced, on trafficking transit routes, and in drug destination countries. It is a fact that as long as the demand for drugs exists, especially in developed countries, drug trafficking networks will continue targeting countries with weak control measures and systems.

My delegation commends the role played by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board and other relevant United Nations organs and agencies in assisting Member States in the fight against drug trafficking. We welcome the joint efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Department of Political Affairs and INTERPOL in this endeavour.

It is encouraging that the World Drug Report 2009 shows a downward trend in the major drug markets in the developed countries. But new data that suggest an increase in the production and use of synthetic drugs in the developing countries, including in Africa, raises serious concerns.

My delegation requests the Secretary-General to consider mainstreaming the issue of drug trafficking as a factor in conflict prevention strategies and in overall assessment, planning and peacekeeping support.

In conclusion, it is clear that drug trafficking is a transnational and cross-cutting problem. I wish to reiterate the need to ensure that actions and strategies at the national, subregional and regional levels and by the wider international community to combat drug trafficking and organized crime are comprehensive and well coordinated.

We thank the delegation of Burkina Faso for preparing the presidential statement which we adopted this morning.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Burkina Faso for this opportunity for us to discuss the consequences of drug trafficking for international peace and security. I also thank Mr. Antonio Maria Costa for his briefing and take this opportunity to reaffirm my country's esteem and appreciation for his endeavours and those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which he heads. France endorses the statement to be made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

The Security Council has repeatedly noted the role played by drug trafficking vis-à-vis the emergence of conflict in places such as Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Afghanistan. With respect to Afghanistan, through resolution 1817 (2008), which was adopted as the result of a French initiative, the Council, inter alia, called for improved oversight of the international trade in chemical precursors. Such examples enable us to better understand the mechanisms that make the global drug problem a cross-cutting threat to international peace and security.

First of all, drug trafficking weakens States. It is accompanied by increased crime, including cartel wars and the development of transnational organized crime. It encourages corruption and money laundering, both of which weaken the capacity of Governments to take action. In some cases, it makes possible the financing of non-governmental armed groups. Drug trafficking never occurs by itself; it always goes hand in hand, ultimately, with arms trafficking, money laundering and even trafficking in human beings.

Because of its transnational nature, drug trafficking also contributes to the destabilization of entire regions. The Security Council has laid repeated stress on the threat that drugs pose to West Africa. The magnitude of the economic stakes involved in drugs, and their links with illicit financial flows and the gradual erosion of the very foundations of States, exacerbate conflicts between countries. Organized crime networks are created at the scale of West Africa, then grow and expand to the rest of the continent. They take advantage of the weakness of States in conflict situations and make the return to peace and economic development a more protracted and more difficult process for those States.

Finally, it is increasingly clear that drug trafficking, owing to its links with illicit international networks, jeopardizes international security beyond the regional level. The recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Afghan opium trafficking demonstrates the role of drug trafficking in funding not only the insurgency in Afghanistan, but also the extremist groups in a number of countries in Central

Asia. The terrorist networks finance their activities partially through drug trafficking.

France welcomes the fact that today's debate enables the Security Council to assess the consequences of drug trafficking for international peace and security. We should now think about the operational ways to better take that factor into account in our strategies for the prevention and treatment of conflicts.

In that regard we attach great importance to regional actions. West Africa is an example, with the implementation of the initiative for the West African coast and the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) regional action plan on drug trafficking and organized crime. We also commend the adoption, on 24 November in Nairobi by 13 States, of the plan of action of East Africa, which has to do with trafficking in drugs, weapons, waste, counterfeit medicine, natural resources and persons, and piracy. There are other examples of regional initiatives, especially the Paris Pact.

Then we need to strengthen effective coordination among the United Nations, regional organizations such as ECOWAS and sectoral organizations, including INTERPOL, the World Health Organization and the World Customs Organization.

Lastly, in the Security Council we favour taking this issue of drug trafficking further into account in the analysis of conflicts, prevention strategies, integrated missions and peacekeeping operations. We will accord the greatest importance to all the elements that could be provided by the Secretariat in its various reports to the Council. We again commend the major contribution by the UNODC in the fight against cross-cutting threats, and we welcome the regular statements by its Executive Director to the Council.

More generally, we must seek to better mobilize and use all United Nations bodies competent in the area of fighting transnational threats. We need a global strategy, both geographically and in terms of the sectors covered. Only the United Nations can craft such a strategy and help with its implementation and follow-up.

The fight against drug trafficking is the subject of one of the most long-standing examples of international cooperation, whose one hundred years we commemorated last year. The conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 provided an appropriate legal framework, which was usefully completed by the Palermo Convention on transnational organized crime and the Merida Convention against corruption. We call for the universalization and full and complete implementation of those legal instruments.

However, one must note that despite the efforts of the international community, the threats posed by drug trafficking to international security are stronger than ever. The Council therefore will need to remain involved in this issue. My country favours further discussions in this body in the near future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): Mr. President, I wish to thank you and your country for this valuable initiative, which for the first time has presented this body with the opportunity to focus specifically on the complex issue of drug trafficking and its devastating consequences, including threats to national, subregional and regional stability and its impact on international security. We are happy to see you, Sir, chairing this open debate. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his thoughtful remarks and persuasive comments on this important subject, and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for his extremely interesting and thought-provoking remarks and briefing.

My country has aligned itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

The fact that the Council has, in more than 200 debates the past twenty years or so, touched on this issue — though mainly in connection with various country-specific situations and in the context of other, more imminent threats — surely testifies to its wide prevalence and seriousness. With that in mind, and equally mindful of the extremely worrisome developments that this Council was recently informed about, particularly in West Africa, we wholeheartedly welcome this timely and comprehensive debate.

As demonstrated by numerous examples, drug production, trafficking, distribution and use is certainly not a stand-alone phenomenon but rather is part of a set of activities closely linked to a whole range of other illegal practices, such as trafficking in persons, arms smuggling and money laundering, that are carried out

almost with impunity in countries with a fragile political and social environment. That explosive cocktail represents a serious danger not only for the affected States that have recently emerged from conflict and are still pursuing delicate internal balances, but also for neighbouring countries, which can and often do become entangled in those activities.

At the same time, and in order to further expand their businesses, drug cartels often use resources from illegal drug trafficking to corrupt personnel from largely undeveloped and seriously underpaying State institutions. Those resources are also often used to finance conflict-related activities, including terrorism — as we have witnessed in a number of countries.

The most evident link between security threats and drug cultivation and trafficking is undoubtedly in Afghanistan, where, as many will agree, drugs and drug trafficking are used to support and fuel the insurgency. However, there are many other places, such as Haiti or West African States, where drug trafficking and cultivation not only have affected, or are affecting, national stability but also pose significant potential threats to regional and international security as well. Croatia expresses its deep concern with regard to recent reports about the increasing amount of drugs coming into West Africa and being consumed locally, not only because of the additional strain posed by the increased number of drug addicts to generally weak societies, but primarily because of the destruction and havoc it causes among young people — the main treasure of developing countries — who are already suffering from poverty and unemployment.

It is self-evident that illegal drug and other criminal organizations are successfully infiltrating and contaminating many vital segments of those struggling societies, including — as this Council has already heard — even the army.

Furthermore, Croatia shares the shock and surprise expressed by the UNODC Executive Director during his recent briefing of the Council at the revelation that West Africa is slowly being transformed from an important drug transit point to a source of the drug trade, as corroborated by large amounts of chemicals used in drug processing recently discovered in some West African locations. We urge the Council not to ignore the warning signs. For our part, we would strongly support immediate, coordinated action aimed at combating this scourge.

One thing is absolutely clear. Only strong national action, bolstered by transregional and international cooperation, has the potential to effectively counter this phenomenon. Common and shared responsibility, as we have heard many times today, and an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach in full conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, should represent the basis for our resolute action. Croatia calls on all States to accede without delay to all relevant international instruments in this field, especially the three United Nations international drug control conventions and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and faithfully implement their provisions.

Croatia fully supports the important endeavours undertaken by main United Nations bodies, especially the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in the fight against the illicit drug trade, as well as the activities of relevant United Nations agencies or bodies and other entities, in particular, the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, UNODC, and the International Narcotics Control Board. Similarly, we sincerely hope that this debate will help to clarify and further shape relations and coordination among United Nations actors and determine how this Council can add its weight and value to this issue.

We share the view that in order to effectively fight illicit drug trafficking and related criminal activities, it is necessary to provide assistance to affected Governments in certain key areas, including the development of alternative livelihoods and markets, enhancing national institutional capacities, enforcing prohibition of the illicit cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, and building up the effective use of intelligence.

Croatia encourages cooperation among affected countries, specifically in strengthening border controls and assisting in the flow and coordination of information between and among appropriate security and law enforcement agencies in order to maximize the effectiveness of all measures taken inside those countries. Conversely, we are also of the view that more efforts should be undertaken by Governments of illicit drug destination countries to reduce the demand for such drugs.

The efficient implementation of a comprehensive approach calls for integrated action within the wider context of efforts in the areas of security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and economic and social reconstruction and development. We strongly support security sector reform processes in affected States, as well as the emerging practice of including drug trafficking as an important part of country-specific analysis, mission assessments, operations planning and mandate renewals. We particularly welcome the growing prominence of drug-related issues in the mandates of newly established integrated offices.

We would like to emphasize the important role that subregional, regional and international organizations, in particular the Economic Community of West African States and INTERPOL, and civil society are playing in the common fight against the illegal drug trade and related organized criminal activities. We encourage their further mutual cooperation, and cooperation with all of those who are involved in this complex exercise.

Finally, we welcome and support the presidential statement adopted today and thank the delegation of Burkina Faso for its leadership and all delegations for the work they invested.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Burkina Faso for taking the initiative to hold an open debate in the Security Council on the question of drug trafficking under the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa". Mr. President, I welcome your presence here in New York today to preside over our meeting in person. I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and Mr. Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to our meeting.

The Outcome Document adopted at the 2005 World Summit emphasizes that drugs, transnational crime and terrorism have negative effects on global development, peace, security and human rights. The international community should take collective action to tackle those problems. That fully demonstrates the great importance the international community attaches to resolving the issue of drugs.

Currently, drug trafficking is still spreading unabated in some parts of the world. It is an acute issue that threatens peace and security in some regions, particularly in West Africa. In recent years, the Security Council has been repeatedly briefed by United Nations West African regional offices and UNODC. Today's open debate in the Council on the question of drug trafficking in West Africa under the agenda item on peace and security in Africa is of particular realistic significance.

Drug trafficking is the main cause of the spread of drugs in today's world. Cracking down on drug trafficking requires that all countries strengthen international cooperation. As indicated in the briefings to the Council over time by the Secretariat and the UNODC, a trafficking route from Latin America to Western Europe and North America via West Africa has developed through international drug trafficking activities. Taking advantage of weak government control in some West African countries, international drug traffickers use that region for transit for drug trafficking activities, and the countries in the region fall victim as a result. That situation not only gives rise to organized crime activities but also affects social stability and security in those countries.

In today's world, with any consumer good, consumption gives rise to demand, and demand generates a market and stimulates production. As a special consumer good, narcotic drugs are no exception. Due to the existence of a relatively stable consumer market for drugs in some developed countries, international drug trafficking cartels, prompted by the huge profits to be made, go to any lengths to organize drug production and trafficking. The areas where drugs are produced or that serve as transit routes are often economically underdeveloped. Therefore the fight for international drug control pivots on international cooperation and must adhere to the principle of shared responsibility.

It is incumbent upon West African countries to strengthen legislation and law enforcement to strictly crack down on international drug trafficking activities. Developed countries — where drug consumption mainly takes place — have strong capacity and government control and are duty bound to shoulder the moral responsibility to eliminate consumption of drugs, thus doing their part to advance the international fight for drug control.

In international cooperation on drugs control, the role of regional organizations, which are at the forefront, should be brought into full play. In recent years the Security Council has on many occasions heard Mr. Costa's briefings on the drug problem in West Africa, and we are deeply concerned about that grave situation. Some West African countries have just extricated themselves from conflict. They face difficulties in economic development, youth employment and rule of law capacity-building, and they are susceptible to inroads by international drug traffickers. In some situations, drug trafficking has even enflamed conflicts in the countries concerned and posed a grave threat to the peace and stability of the West African region.

The concern of the international community over the peace and security situation in that region should be translated into concrete measures to help West African countries and regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States to strengthen their anti-drugs capacity and enhance government monitoring and control capacities and judicial and military capacities against drug-related crimes. At the same time, the international community has the duty to help underdeveloped countries to gradually develop their economies, create job opportunities and improve the livelihood of their peoples, so as to raise the awareness and capacity of young people to say "no" to the temptation of drugs. That is the fundamental way — and the only way — that international drug control can make a real difference.

International drug control calls for an even stronger United Nations role in communication and coordination. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the UNODC have done a great deal in fighting global drug trafficking and have made much progress. However, given the grave situation stemming from the spread of drugs, international efforts are far from adequate. Drug crimes are a malignant tumour on the body of human society. The fight against drugs is therefore a noble lifesaving cause.

As a major forum for promoting international cooperation and safeguarding world peace, the United Nations should play a bigger role in this fight. We support the relevant functional bodies of the United Nations in continuing the discussions on this subject and hope that the Security Council will continue to give its attention to the work in this area.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank you, Sir, for your initiative to organize this meeting of the Security Council on the fight against the illicit traffic in drugs and for the adoption of today's important presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/32).

Drug trafficking poses a serious and growing threat to international peace and security. Together with organized crime and terrorism, drug trafficking has grown to dangerous proportions in various regions of the world. We support the resolve of the Security Council, the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, to assist in resolving this pernicious problem.

The grave drug threat emerging from the territory of Afghanistan is of a global nature. The Russian Federation believes that the impetus for mobilizing international cooperation in countering the Afghan drug threat lies in the decisions adopted within the framework of the Paris-Moscow process, under United Nations auspices. The time has come to consider how to build on and complement these decisions, taking into account the latest trends in the evolving drug situation in and around Afghanistan. In that regard, we favour the convening of a third ministerial conference within the Paris-Moscow process in late 2010.

There is a growing and urgent need to create buffer zones around Afghanistan to ensure anti-drug, counter-terrorist and financial security. A call to develop broad and effective international cooperation consonant with that initiative is contained in the outcome document of the special conference on Afghanistan held in Moscow in March under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

We believe that one example of effective cooperation among States in curbing the illegal flow of drugs is Operation Channel, carried out under the auspices of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. The list of participants in the Operation grows ever year, and its purposes reflect the global nature of drug trafficking and its nexus with other types of criminal activity. In 2009, the Operation sought to close off the conduits for smuggled Afghan

opiates into the territories of States of the Eurasian region, synthetic drugs from Europe and cocaine from Latin America; to curb the illegal flow of precursors into Central Asian States and Afghanistan; to seize illicitly trafficked weapons, munitions and explosives; and to counter the laundering of drug revenues.

The problem of drug trafficking has also deteriorated in West Africa. Exploiting the weakness of existing West African counter-narcotics mechanisms, porous borders and feeble national security sectors, international criminality has turned that subregion into a major new transit hub for cocaine. The Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime must step up their efforts in that regard through the development of operational counter-narcotics programmes. The United Nations Office for West Africa should pursue its practical contributions to the work in this area.

We consider the problem of drug smuggling and associated transnational organized crime to be one of the most serious threats to the security of African countries, in particular those in transition towards recovery following destructive armed conflict.

It may be concluded that the problem of the spread of drugs has become global, and that more robust measures to eradicate it are called for.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I should like to applaud the initiative of Burkina Faso to organize today's debate on drug trafficking as a threat to international security. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa for their statements.

Drug trafficking poses a serious threat to international peace and security. We share the deep concern about the increasing linkage between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, such as trafficking in small arms and persons, money-laundering, corruption and cybercrime. In some areas, drug trafficking finances terrorist activities.

Drug trafficking has a highly destabilizing impact, particularly on States in conflict and post-conflict situations. Given their vulnerable and weak governance, those countries become easy targets as transit points for international organized crime groups. Instability creates the risk of relapse into conflict, while instability in one country may spread to neighbouring countries and threaten regional stability. Once it has penetrated a soft target, it will easily spread to an entire region.

Drug trafficking also decomposes the social fabric from inside. With profits from drug trafficking, small arms and weapons proliferate, while soldiers — including child soldiers — can easily fall into addiction and become vicious killers. This process prolongs conflict itself, prevents the establishment of the rule of law and impedes sustainable development. It is therefore most appropriate for the Security Council to discuss problems related to drug trafficking from the point of view of securing stability and preventing conflict.

Such critical security consequences of drug trafficking are manifested most acutely in West Africa. Many States of the region are still in fragile situations as they emerge from conflict. Due to the weakness of their regulatory institutions and judicial systems, these countries remain attractive to those exploiting illicit drug trafficking across national borders. West Africa remains largely a transit point from South America to Europe, but the transit of large amounts of narcotics is posing a growing threat of local addiction.

The number of drug seizures in the region seems to be diminishing. We may take this as a positive sign that the collective efforts and regulations have had a positive effect. However, new and disturbing trends are emerging. Trafficking routes may merely have been displaced further South along the West African coast. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL have found large amounts of precursor chemicals for drug processing to convert pasta basica into high-grade cocaine. Intra-continental drug trafficking between East and West Africa has even been noted. We should conclude from this that drug trafficking is seriously undermining efforts in West Africa to build safe, sound and prosperous societies. The situation is becoming a threat to international security, and concerted efforts are necessary.

In West Africa, a regional response is essential in order to break this negative cycle. First of all, we need to universalize the international legal framework to address illicit drug trafficking. More than 180 countries, including many in West Africa, have becomes parties to three United Nations conventions: the Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the Convention on

Psychotropic Substances and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. These agreements are cornerstones of the international effort to combat drug trafficking. We should focus on effective implementation of those Conventions in West Africa.

Secondly, the countries of the region must commit themselves to enforcing tighter border controls and customs, anti-corruption policies and internal security. The international community needs to provide those countries with capacity-building support through the training of experts, the sharing of information and the supply of logistical support.

Thirdly, it is critical for the countries of West Africa to coordinate their efforts to tackle drug trafficking with comprehensive peacebuilding strategies. In countries emerging from conflict, the military and police are frequently integrated without proper vetting and training. In order to prevent the infiltration of illicit drugs into the security services, it is important to take measures to reform the military and police and to establish the rule of law. To prevent former soldiers and young people from becoming involved in the drug trade, it is important to reintegrate ex-combatants and create job opportunities for youth. Disarmament and the collection of small arms are also important to preventing organized crime groups from acquiring more advanced weapons.

There is clearly an important linkage between counter-narcotics policy and successful peacebuilding efforts. The integrated peacebuilding strategies for Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau place a high priority on counter-narcotics measures, together with the promotion of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the integration of ex-combatants and job creation for youth.

This linkage for preventing the recurrence of conflict should be emphasized in future discussions of regional issues that the Security Council will take up, and also in the Peacebuilding Commission. Various United Nations entities are supporting the implementation of the regional action plan of the Economic Community of West African States to address illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. We wish the activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Office for West Africa, UNODC and INTERPOL to be better coordinated and strengthened. They may draw useful lessons from other regional operations, for instance, the Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference, to further promote regional cooperation.

In conclusion, the drug problem is discussed in many United Nations forums, including the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted this year a Political Declaration and a 10-year Action Plan, stretching until 2019. I believe that today's debate in the Security Council provides a broader security perspective and insights with which the entire United Nations system may more efficiently — but also effectively and comprehensively — address the drug trafficking problem.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I wish, Sir, to congratulate your country on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of December. Your presence here this morning and your organization of this important debate demonstrate the importance Burkina Faso attaches to the issue of drug trafficking. They also illustrate the commitment of African countries to fight this plague with determination and political will.

The participation of the Secretary-General earlier this morning shows that the United Nations is fully aware of the need to address the issue as a matter of priority, given its potential consequences for affected countries and regions. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, for his informative presentation.

By its very nature, the fight against international drug trafficking requires a concerted effort by all countries affected by it. A consensus approach has already been devised by the international community to deal with this scourge. It recognizes that countries of production, transit and use of illicit drugs have shared responsibilities in preventing and combating the problem. Any sustainable effort against this threat can succeed only if it properly addresses all the links of the international drug trade. Real solutions require multidimensional actions, with the engagement of key players at the national, regional and international levels.

That is why international drug trafficking is, first and foremost, a matter for international cooperation against transnational organized crime. The 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime constitute the primary framework for this endeavour. Institution-building and support for the development of law enforcement capacity are key elements to ensure their implementation. In some armed conflicts, and even in countries emerging from conflict, transnational organized drug trafficking may affect national and international peace and security. An example that easily comes to mind is the financing of terrorist or rebel groups through drug trafficking. If and when confronted with those extreme situations, the Security Council will have to determine the most appropriate measures to address them, taking into account the specificities of each case. It goes without saying that national Governments and the international community as a whole should do their utmost to prevent the problem from reaching such alarming proportions.

Drug trafficking tends to thrive in a context of socio-economic deprivation. Economic growth and employment, especially for youth, are therefore particularly relevant in addressing some of the underlying conditions that allow the problem to develop in vulnerable countries. It is essential to act vigorously both in the fight against drug trafficking networks and in the promotion of alternative livelihoods for disenfranchised populations that may be pushed into the drug economy.

Support for the fight against drug trafficking has been designated as one of the priority areas in the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea Bissau, adopted last year in the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, which the Permanent Representative of Brazil has the honour of chairing. The ongoing review process of that strategy has confirmed the importance that the country itself and the members of the Commission attach to this issue. It is noteworthy that the country-specific configuration for Sierra Leone has also taken up this issue as an important challenge to the peacebuilding process. Those two configurations organized a joint meeting earlier this year dedicated to this matter. That initiative highlighted the importance of coordinated action at the regional level.

In this regard, we look forward to the implementation of the regional operational plan of the Economic Community of West African States, an initiative that deserves unwavering support. We also very much appreciate the West Africa Coast Initiative, developed by UNODC, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Office for West Africa and INTERPOL. The engagement of the African Union will strengthen this process of regional cooperation.

We are all aware that progress in combating drug trafficking, preventing it from further threatening our societies and addressing its root causes will be made if national Governments, the various parts of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations not only act with common purpose but also improve the coordination of their respective actions. This is no small challenge. If we succeed in this collective effort, however, we will be able to avoid situations in which the Security Council needs to be involved. That should be our common goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): It is good to see you, Mr. President, sharing in this important debate.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

This debate is indeed very timely. Drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime are posing increasingly difficult challenges to international peace and security. Apart from its devastating health and socio-economic effects, the narcotics business contributes to international instability and constitutes a threat to the security of States. In recent years, there has been a growing concern about a possible nexus between the financing of terrorist groups and narcotics profits. In some parts of the world, the huge profits generated through drug trafficking fuel corruption and undermine State authority, economic development and the rule of law.

While the responsibility to address the narcotics problem rests primarily with Member States, the challenge is international and requires global and regional cooperation. The 2005 World Summit stressed the need to overcome the global narcotics problem through international cooperation and national strategies.

The United Nations and its various agencies have taken important steps to strengthen the international response to drug trafficking, through both international regulation and assistance in capacity-building. These efforts must continue. The European Union (EU) thanks the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its important work to assist Member States in building capacity to address illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. Efforts must be integrated in peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding support and development cooperation. The European Union stands ready to support the United Nations in developing a more robust answer to new demands in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including addressing drug trafficking, other forms of organized crime and corruption.

The European Union Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012 outlines European Union priorities in cooperating with third countries and regions. The Action Plan seeks to enhance international cooperation, inter alia, to address trafficking routes and prevent the diversion of chemical production. The European Union has declared drug trafficking, especially the West and Central African routes for storage and transit, a priority in the fight against organized crime. We are addressing the transregional nature of drug trafficking through a global programme covering Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa, as well as some Maghreb countries. Efforts are undertaken in cooperation with UNODC.

Transnational threats such as drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime affect all countries, but are particularly devastating for developing States and countries in transition. In West Africa, criminal entrepreneurs have exploited vulnerabilities in the wake of armed conflicts across the region. Adding to the problem, Latin American drug traffickers have linked up with West African crime groups. The threat assessment recently published by UNODC paints a grim picture of the threat of organized crime to West Africa and to all of us. A similar picture is painted by the European Police Office. This shows the truly international character of the challenge we are facing.

As the link between Latin American drug cartels and West African traffickers is becoming more apparent, the EU has continued its support to Latin American efforts in relation to drug supply reduction, while at the same time trying to improve intelligence coordination and practical cooperation between the two regions.

An important element of the European Union's efforts in West Africa is the EU mission in support of security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau. The EU and its member States are also contributing to the struggle against drug trafficking in West Africa through some 70 projects aimed at institution-building, policy support and law enforcement.

The European Union reaffirms its support to the Economic Community of West African States Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. In July, United Nations agencies, in cooperation with INTERPOL, launched the West Africa Coast Initiative to work in synergy to support this regional plan. This was an important step towards strengthening the coherence of the international response to organized crime in the region.

Apart from West Africa and Latin America, the European Union is focusing its efforts on helping Afghanistan to address its drug trafficking problem. There have been some positive developments during the past two years, including a decrease in opium poppy cultivation and greater regional counter-narcotics cooperation. However, the production and trafficking of drugs remain important sources of finance for insurgent groups and fuel for corruption.

The European Union supports the National Drug Control Strategy and will maintain the counter-narcotics dialogue with Afghanistan. Our joint efforts are focused on law enforcement, public health and rural development programmes, including the promotion of alternative development. Regional stability is also of key importance. The Council of the European Union recently adopted a plan for strengthened action in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We will continue to pursue cooperation initiatives and strongly support UNODC activities in the region.

The fight against the illicit trafficking of drugs must focus on all aspects of supply and demand, as

well as on illicit financial flows. Better regulatory frameworks and extended efforts in building national capacities in the areas of rule of law, socio-economic stability and public health are all central elements in meeting this challenge.

Let me assure the Council that the European Union will continue to be an active partner in international and regional efforts to address the threat posed by drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime also in the period to come.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, and your country on presiding over the Security Council during the month of December. We commend your initiative to convene this debate on the challenge represented by the world drug problem, under the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa". Likewise, we welcome the presentation made by Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The conclusions reached at the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March are particularly relevant in view of the challenge that the world drug problem continues to pose 11 years after the convening of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. In the Political Declaration and the Action Plan adopted in March this year, the high-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs reaffirmed the fundamental principle that each link of the world drug problem must be addressed within the framework of common and shared responsibility and through international cooperation.

The achievements of the Colombian Government in the fight against the global drug problem over more than three decades are widely recognized. The Colombian State, through a strategy based on taking action against illegal groups, reducing demand, weakening the economic structure of drug trafficking and reducing supply with an emphasis on the eradication of illicit crops, has achieved sound results.

The UNODC *World Drug Report 2009* recognizes the results achieved in decreasing illegal crops in Colombia. Since 2002 to date, the manual eradication and spraying of illegal crops have increased by 72 per cent. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the coca cultivation area in Colombia, which had reached 160,000 hectares early in the decade, was reduced in 2008 to 81,000 hectares, representing a 50 per cent decrease. Moreover, UNODC estimates in its report that the total volume of the potential production of cocaine in Colombia decreased by 28 per cent from 2007 to 2008, an even greater decrease than that observed in the cultivation area.

As a consequence of the achievements in Colombia, among other factors, the adaptability of transnational organized crime has led to the geographic dispersal and extension to a greater number of countries of the cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs. In its comprehensive and determined fight against the global drug problem, Colombia has gained experience and capabilities which it has actively shared through various cooperation projects. We have addressed requests for training and technical assistance from countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, Central America, West Africa and Asia. The conclusions of the Regional Summit on the World Drug Problem, Security and Cooperation, held in Cartagena in 2008, give us a solid base for tackling the problem we are discussing in today's debate. At that Summit, a number of countries from Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirmed, among other things, their commitment to strengthening mechanisms for technical and institutional coordination and experience-sharing, with a view to reducing illicit cultivation and the production of illicit drugs. Furthermore, the Political Declaration and Action Plan adopted at the Ministerial Conference of the Economic Community of West African States, held in October 2008, offer a significant contribution.

The two meetings I have mentioned offered opportunities that promoted interregional dialogue, which is a valuable instrument in the fight against the global drug problem. We appreciate the role that the United Nations can play in increasing and facilitating such dialogue.

Colombia has joined the efforts of the international community aimed at tackling the problem of drug trafficking to Europe via the West coast of Africa. We are participating actively in an initiative for cooperation and information exchange between State security organs against the trafficking of cocaine from Latin America to West Africa.

On February of this year, Colombia hosted the first meeting with African countries organized with the support of the United Nations, the European Commission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States, the American Police Community, the Latin American and Caribbean Community on Police Intelligence and the Colombian National Police. Nineteen countries participated in this meeting, including seven from the African continent. During that meeting, training in specialized techniques to combat drug trafficking was provided, and channels of communication were opened to facilitate the exchange of information.

With regard to the problem of the trafficking of drugs to Europe through the West Coast of Africa, operational coordination, while indispensable, is only a first step. Efforts must be focused on developing coordinated strategies to address the various components of the problem. The capacity of United Nations is invaluable in the coordination of these efforts.

The experience of Colombia confirms that only through a balanced approach to decreasing both the supply of and the demand for drugs will it be possible to move forward efficiently and progressively in the fight against the world drug problem.

It is indispensable to tackle all the links. All the countries involved, be they producer, transit or consumer countries, must tackle the various aspects of the problem in unison and with the same resolve.

Colombia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to continue working at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, through effective cooperation activities that address the transnational, dynamic and multidimensional nature of this crime.

The President: (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to warmly congratulate you and to express my profound gratitude for the commendable initiative on the part of Burkina Faso, as President of the Security Council for the month of December, to organize, under the agenda item entitled "Peace and security in Africa", an open debate on the subject of drug trafficking as a threat to international security. This timely initiative and those that will emerge over the next three weeks crown the work completed by our sister Republic of Burkina Faso over the past 24 months in the Security Council.

The issue of drug trafficking is one of great urgency and is at the very heart of the concerns of the international community. That is why my country, Senegal, attaches particular interest to today's debate. The importance that we attach to the consideration of the issue of drug trafficking reflects the scale of the multiple and multiform threats to which this scourge exposes us. It goes without saying that drug trafficking involves well structured international networks that have ramifications in almost all parts of the world and carry out activities so dangerous that they undermine the authority of States and endanger the lives and wellbeing of thousands of human beings.

Beyond drug addiction, which is just one of this scourge's countless devastating effects and which poses a genuine problem to public health, the problem also has disastrous economic and financial consequences. The profits of illicit trafficking, which are often laundered so that they can be invested in the legal economy, pose a real economic problem. In particular, the weakening of control by public authorities over the economy when significant sums of illegally obtained money are put into the financial system is a major cause for concern, in particular for developing countries. This threat is all the more worrying in that it has now been established that drug trafficking goes hand in hand with a number of other criminal activities which, in turn, fuel transnational organized crime.

Today, there can be no doubt that the substantial profits at stake in drug trafficking attract numerous criminal groups that rely upon it as the principal source of funding for their activities. The danger is so great, as many reports of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have stated, that a link has been established between drug trafficking and the funding of armed conflicts and terrorism in many regions. The connections between drug trafficking and other criminal activities, such as money-laundering, corruption, arms trafficking, trafficking in human beings and terrorism, reflects the magnitude and complexity of this scourge, which, without a doubt, is a serious threat to international peace and security.

Stepping up international efforts to fight drug trafficking and related activities has led, among other

things, to the improvement of the international legal framework in this area. While the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, known as the Vienna Convention, was the first international response to the proliferation of this scourge, the adoption of international instruments for the fight against organized transnational crime and corruption would allow us to repress these related criminal activities. Those include specifically the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, known as the Palermo Convention of 2000, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 2003. In the same vein, several initiatives and commitments have been undertaken at the regional, subregional and national levels to curb the phenomenon.

Despite all the efforts made in that regard to fight drug trafficking, we must acknowledge, as part of our condemnation of it, that that evil remains undiminished and a source of great concern. Worse, the phenomenon has become even more complex, given that the criminal networks involved in that illicit trafficking make use of developments in the area of information and communications technologies to enhance their organization. Thus, those criminals, who have vast resources, are not lacking in imagination and sophisticated methods to deceive the vigilance of the most effective control systems.

My delegation remains deeply concerned about the surge in drug trafficking. Our concern is even greater since Africa, in particular West Africa, is today becoming the hub of international drug trafficking. The numbers speak for themselves. According to the 2008 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, entitled "Drug trafficking as a security threat in West Africa", the amount of cocaine seized per year in the region is estimated at around 50 tons.

While it appears clearly in that report that the drug cartels of Latin America are preying on West Africa, the primary reason is to be found in the institutional weaknesses of certain States in the subregion. Those States must be helped as they are burdened by the weight of poverty and, moreover, are experiencing political instability. Thus, drug trafficking throws a spark into a region that is already highly flammable and poses a real threat to security.

Although Africa does not produce such drugs, it suffers more seriously the consequences and implications of the illicit trafficking in those products, which could weaken its already fragile economy and poison its working population, primarily made up of young people. Thus, we need to urgently step up our efforts to address the underlying causes of that region's vulnerability. It is therefore necessary to provide technical assistance in order to develop and strengthen the national capacities of those countries so that they can more effectively prevent and fight drug trafficking and organized transnational crime in general.

In that regard, I welcome the project entitled the West Africa Coast Initiative, led by the United Nations Office for West Africa in partnership with UNODC and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which seeks to strengthen capacities with regard to applying the law in four pilot countries, namely, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Initiative is consonant with the goals of the Economic Community of West African States Plan of Action against drug trafficking, adopted in October 2008.

However, so as to take into account the full extent of the fight against the drug scourge and its various aspects, our actions must not be limited to simply strengthening national capacities in the area of regulation and monitoring. It must also seek to tackle the problems related to the poverty, underdevelopment and political and social instability that encourage the spread of that evil.

Since drug trafficking is a transnational phenomenon, a synergy of actions at the regional and international levels is also necessary to confront it effectively and lastingly. Clearly, that entails strengthening and improving international cooperation, especially in the areas of mutual and police assistance and the exchange of information, and also, in particular, coordinating the actions of all entities and bodies involved in the fight.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): It is with pleasure that I deliver this statement in my capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I would like to start by thanking Their Excellencies the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso for their initiative in calling for this important debate on drug trafficking as a threat to international security, and the Secretary-General for his valuable contribution to today's debate. I would also like to thank Mr. Antonio

Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his comprehensive report, schedules and maps. I would like also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives in the ongoing combat against drug trafficking.

The Non-Aligned Movement recognizes the challenge posed to the international community by the growth in illicit cross-border and cross-regional drug trafficking. In that context, we note with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes aimed at providing the needed financial and technological assistance to Member countries, especially in Africa, to support and develop their national capabilities and to reinforce their ability to develop their human resources and national institutions so as to face the devastating challenges that have plagued our international community today, namely, drug trafficking, corruption and transnational organized crime in all their forms.

In a globalized world characterized by interwoven and successive economic, political and social changes, there is a need to address our existing challenges in a comprehensive and integrated manner, with the aim of maximizing our benefits and mitigating their repercussions on our societies. The phenomenon of globalization, coupled with continuous technological advancements, imposes serious challenges to our ability and efforts to combat drug trafficking.

Also, we cannot discuss efforts to combat the cultivation, production and trafficking of drugs without addressing other forms of transnational organized crime, as well as the laundering of the proceeds derived from them. Furthermore, it is no longer sufficient to combat illicit traditional drugs, the cultivation areas of which have decreased globally over the past year. It is also of paramount importance that we recognize that technological advancements have facilitated the development of new synthetic drugs that are deadlier, easier to transport and smuggle, and less costly to manufacture, resulting in an increase in the number of centres for the global production of such toxins.

Therefore, we need to intensify international cooperation against that new challenge in close cooperation with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

This was reaffirmed by the most recent Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, which reiterated that more effective measures must be taken to prevent, combat and eradicate the world drug problem in all its aspects. It also acknowledged that no single Government or organization can successfully combat this menace alone, given that criminal organizations linked to drug trafficking operate collectively and employ a transboundary approach, and are increasing their traffic routes and distribution methods. Cooperation, coordination and committed action by all countries and regions are therefore essential to curb this phenomenon.

The Summit also reemphasized that the fight against the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility that should be tackled in a multilateral framework. It can be effectively dealt with only by enhancing regional and international cooperation in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other provisions of international law, particularly respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States; the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs; and the principle of equality. Such cooperation requires increased efforts to prevent and combat all aspects of the world drug problem, including demand reduction, and to formulate suitable solutions, including sustainable alternative development programmes and strategies.

Drug traffickers are systematically taking advantage of open borders and weak security institutions in some regions. The past few years have highlighted the fact that this is the case in Africa, particularly West Africa, where several Member States are recovering from prolonged conflicts and rebuilding their institutions and capabilities. The explosion in illicit drug production and trade is having a negative effect on overall sustainable development efforts in Africa.

The proliferation of this phenomenon is also a threat to security on the continent, as trafficking proceeds are either laundered through national financial systems, deeply undermining their reputation and crippling their development, or used to acquire small arms and light weapons. Since these are one of the main factors fuelling conflict, instability and terrorism in Africa, they threaten African countries with a slide back into conflict.

Furthermore, recent increases in illicit drug consumption, especially of synthetic drugs, are having a negative effect on African efforts — conducted in cooperation with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and in collaboration with African regional and subregional organizations and institutions, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — to achieve the internationally agreed development goals set out in the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, especially the Millennium Development Goals.

The Non-Aligned Movement Summit at Sharm el-Sheikh reaffirmed that trafficking in persons also continues to pose a serious challenge to humanity and requires a concerted international response. It urged all States to increase their efforts to combat trafficking in persons, by actively contributing, among other things, to shaping a global partnership against these inhumane crimes. Such a partnership would be aimed at improving coordination and information exchange, especially in protecting the rights of victims of trafficking. The United Nations therefore needs to develop a coherent and comprehensive approach to addressing this crime; this can be done by a process of consultations among Member States, launched by the President of the General Assembly, on a global plan of action on combating trafficking in persons, to be adopted by the Assembly. Moreover, NAM is appreciative of the efforts currently being undertaken by the Assembly in this area, and commends the leading role that UNODC is playing in countering this serious crime.

NAM believes that directing full attention to the worsening illicit drug trade in West Africa is urgent. It is high time for the international community, in full collaboration with the United Nations, to give its unequivocal support to the efforts of West African States and ECOWAS to combat this crime. Political leaders in the region have affirmed their commitment to this fight by adopting the ECOWAS Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa. ECOWAS has also begun developing structures and adopting strategies and programmes to deal with the multifaceted aspects of illicit drug trafficking and production. Now it is time for the international community to reinforce these efforts by rendering full political, financial, and technical support to the subregion in order to effectively and efficiently deploy every instrument and mechanism at its disposal, and to develop those still needed to curb the drug problem in West Africa.

In this context, NAM emphasizes the need to improve the existing partnership between Africa and the United Nations, through the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and UNODC. This must be done in a comprehensive and integrated manner, building on accumulated experiences and lessons learned, and in full cooperation with African regional organizations and the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, as well as other entities.

The success of peacebuilding efforts in Africa, particularly West Africa, also remains dependent on the level of support extended by the United Nations to African countries and regional structures, aimed at reinforcing national and regional institutions, in order to promptly and effectively implement various action plans and strategies for confronting transnational crimes and facing challenges to sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3.15 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.